

What is claimed is:

1. A system for transferring knowledge between a plurality of users with a shared drawing surface, the system comprising a plurality of work areas, each comprising a main layer, a background layer, a participant layer, and a moderator layer.

2. The system of Claim 1, wherein the plurality of work areas comprises:
a moderator work area; and

a plurality of participant work areas, each comprising functionality to create a participant erase object, the participant erase object defining an area of the shared drawing surface in which a corresponding portion of the participant layer is replaced with a corresponding portion of the background layer, and a corresponding portion of the main layer is replaced with a corresponding portion of the moderator layer.

3. The system of Claim 2, wherein the moderator work area comprises functionality to create a moderator erase object, the moderator erase object defining an area of the shared drawing surface in which a corresponding portion of the moderator layer is replaced with a corresponding portion of the background layer, and a corresponding portion of the main layer is replaced with a corresponding portion of the participant layer.

4. The system of Claim 1, wherein the plurality of work areas comprises:
a moderator work area comprising functionality to create a moderator erase object, the moderator erase object defining an area of the shared drawing surface in which a corresponding portion of the main layer is replaced with a corresponding portion of the participant layer, and a corresponding portion of the moderator layer is replaced with a corresponding portion of the background layer; and
a plurality of participant work areas.

5. A network of computers programmed for knowledge transfer in a group setting,
the network comprising:
a server comprising a database;

a plurality of participant workstations, each programmed to provide a participant work area and having at least one corresponding participant input-device, and each of the participant input-devices being adapted to create data structures defining participant images that are then included the participant work area;

a moderator workstation, programmed to provide a moderator work area and comprising at least one moderator input-device, the at least one moderator input-device being adapted to:

create data structures defining moderator images that are then included in the moderator work area, and

to select moderator images that are then simultaneously included on each of plurality of participant work areas;

wherein the data structures are stored in the database; and

wherein the moderator input-device is further adapted to select participant images from any of the plurality of participant work areas that are then included on the moderator work area.

6. The network of claim 5, wherein the moderator work area comprises a main layer, a moderator layer, a first participant layer, and a background layer.

7. The network of claim 6, wherein each participant's work station displays a participant's main layer, the participant's main layer being a composite of the moderator layer, the background layer, a second participant layer.

8. The network of claim 5, wherein the network can be used in a group mode and a standalone mode.

9. The network of claim 5, wherein the workstations are located such that a first user positioned to use a workstation and a second user positioned to use a different workstation can hear each other speak.

10. The network of claim 9, wherein every user positioned to use a workstation can hear every other user positioned to use any other workstation.

11. The network of claim 5, wherein no user positioned to use a workstation can hear any other user positioned to use a different workstation.

12. The network of claim 5, wherein images are organized in notebook data structures comprising at least one panel.

13. The network of claim 12, wherein the images are stored as at least one object in a single panel.

14. The network of claim 5, wherein images placed on a participant's work area at a participant workstation may be viewed only at that workstation unless an instruction to permit the images to be viewed from another workstation is given at the participant workstation providing the participant's work area.

15. The network of claim 14, wherein the instruction to permit the images to be viewed from another workstation actively causes data structures corresponding to the images to be transmitted to another workstation.

16. The network of claim 5, further comprising collision-correction functionality.

17. The network of claim 16, wherein the collision-correction functionality comprises functionality permitting toggling between a plurality of view modes.

18. The network of claim 16, wherein the collision-correction functionality comprises functionality permitting relocation of images on the participant work area.

19. The network of claim 18, wherein the relocation of images occurs automatically when a collision occurs.

20. The network of claim 5, further comprising collision-avoidance functionality.

21. The network of claim 20, wherein the collision-avoidance functionality comprises a margin that does not have a corresponding location of the shared work area.

22. The network of claim 20, wherein the collision-avoidance functionality comprises functionality that permits the participant to place footnote images on the participant work area that provide a link between the footnote images and corresponding images placed on a portion of the participant work area that is not superimposed on the shared work area.

23. The network of claim 20, wherein the collision-avoidance functionality comprises functionality that permits the participant to place footnote images in the participant public work area, the footnote images providing a link to corresponding images located elsewhere.

24. The network of claim 23, wherein the participant work area comprises a virtual drawing surface, the virtual drawing surface comprising a main layer, a moderator layer, a background layer, and a participant layer having a margin that does not overlap with either of the moderator layer and the background layer, wherein the corresponding images are placed on the margin on the participant layer.

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25. A network of computers programmed for knowledge transfer in a group setting, the network comprising:

- a server comprising a database;

- a plurality of participant workstations, each programmed to provide a participant work area and having at least one corresponding participant input-device, and each of the participant input-devices being adapted to create data structures defining participant images that are then included on the participant work area;

- a moderator workstation, programmed to provide a moderator work area and comprising at least one moderator input-device, the at least one moderator input-device being adapted to:

create data structures defining moderator images that are then included on the moderator work area, and
select moderator images that are then simultaneously included on each of plurality of participant work areas;
wherein the data structures are stored in the database;
wherein the moderator work area comprises a moderator public scroll and a moderator private scroll, and each participant work area comprises a participant public scroll and a participant private scroll;
wherein each participant workstation displays images placed on the participant's public scroll by the moderator superimposed on images placed on the participant's public scroll by the participant; and
wherein the moderator input-device is further adapted to select participant images from any of the plurality of participant work areas that are then included on the moderator work area.

26. The network of claim 25, wherein the network can be used in a group mode and a standalone mode.

27. The network of claim 25, wherein the workstations are located such that a first user positioned to use a workstation and a second user positioned to use a different workstation can hear each other speak.

28. The network of claim 27, wherein every user positioned to use a workstation can hear every other user positioned to use any other workstation.

29. The network of claim 25, wherein the data structures defining the images are organized in notebook data structures comprising at least one panel.

30. The network of claim 25, wherein the data structures defining the images comprise at least one object in a single panel.

31. The network of claim 25, wherein images placed on a participant's work area at a participant workstation may be viewed only at that workstation unless an instruction to permit the images to be viewed from another workstation is given at the participant workstation providing the participant's work area.

32. The network of claim 31, wherein the instruction to permit the images to be viewed from another workstation actively causes data structures corresponding to the images to be transmitted to another workstation.

33. The network of claim 25, further comprising collision-correction functionality.

34. The network of claim 33, wherein the collision-correction functionality comprises functionality permitting toggling between a plurality of view modes.

35. The network of claim 33, wherein the collision-correction functionality comprises functionality permitting relocation of images on the participant work area.

36. The network of claim 35, wherein the relocation of images occurs automatically when a collision occurs.

37. The network of claim 25, further comprising collision-avoidance functionality.

38. The network of claim 37, wherein the collision-avoidance functionality comprises an area on the participant's work area that does not have a corresponding location to any location on the shared work area.

39. The network of claim 37, wherein the collision-avoidance functionality comprises functionality that permits the participant to place footnote images on the participant work area that provide a link between the footnote images and corresponding images that are not typically superimposed on the shared work area.

40. The network of claim 37, wherein each participant work area comprises a main layer, a background layer, a participant layer, and a moderator layer.

41. The network of claim 40, wherein the collision-avoidance functionality comprises providing a margin on the participant layer that does not overlap with either of the background layer and moderator layer.

42. A network of computers programmed for knowledge transfer in a group setting, the network comprising:

- a plurality of participant workstations, each programmed to provide a participant work area and having at least one corresponding participant input-device, each of the participant input-devices being adapted to create data structures defining participant images that are then included on the participant work area;

- a moderator workstation, programmed to provide a moderator work area and comprising at least one moderator input-device, the at least one moderator input-device being adapted to:

- create data structures defining moderator images that are then included on the moderator work area, and

- to select moderator images that are then simultaneously included on each of plurality of participant work areas;

wherein the moderator work area comprises a main layer, a moderator layer, a participant layer, and a background layer;

wherein each participant work station comprises a participant's virtual drawing surface, the virtual drawing surface comprising:

- a main layer;

- a participant layer;

- a moderator layer common to the moderator's work area; and

- a background layer common to the moderator's work area;

wherein the moderator input-device is further adapted to select participant layers from any of the plurality of participant work areas that are then placed on the moderator's participant layer;

wherein the network can be used in a group mode and a standalone mode; and wherein the workstations are located such that a first user positioned to use a workstation and a second user positioned to use a different workstation can hear each other speak.

43. The network of claim 42, wherein every user positioned to use a workstation can hear every other user positioned to use any other workstation.

44. The network of claim 42, wherein data structures defining images are organized in notebook data structures comprising at least one panel.

45. The network of claim 42, further comprising a server having a database residing thereon, and wherein the data structures defining the images are stored in the database.

46. The network of claim 42, wherein images placed on a participant work area at a participant workstation may be viewed only at that workstation unless a participant decides to permit it to be viewed from another workstation.

47. The network of claim 42, wherein images placed on a participant's work area at a participant workstation may be viewed only at that workstation unless an instruction to permit the images to be viewed from another workstation is given at the participant workstation providing the participant's work area.

48. The network of claim 47, wherein the instruction to permit the images to be viewed from another workstation actively causes data structures corresponding to the images to be transmitted to another workstation.

49. The network of claim 42, further comprising collision-correction functionality.

50. The network of claim 49, wherein the collision-correction functionality comprises functionality permitting toggling between a plurality of view modes.

51. The network of claim 49, wherein the plurality of view modes includes at least one member from the set consisting of:

- a) a mode in which the moderator layer is displayed;
- b) a mode in which the background layer is displayed;
- c) a mode in which the participant layer is displayed.

52. The network of claim 49, wherein the collision-correction functionality comprises functionality permitting relocation of images in the participant work area.

53. The network of claim 52, wherein the relocation of images occurs automatically when a collision occurs.

54. The network of claim 42, further comprising collision-avoidance functionality.

55. The network of claim 54, wherein the collision-avoidance functionality comprises an area on the participant layer that does not overlap with either of the moderator layer and the background layer.

56. The network of claim 54, wherein the collision-avoidance functionality comprises functionality that permits the participant to place footnote images on the participant work area that provide a link between the footnote images and corresponding images located elsewhere.

57. A network of computers programmed for knowledge transfer in a group setting, the network comprising:

a server comprising a database;

a plurality of participant workstations, each programmed to provide a participant work area and having at least one corresponding participant input-device, each of the participant input-devices being adapted to create data structures defining participant images that are then included on the participant work area;

a moderator workstation, programmed to provide a moderator work area and comprising at least one moderator input-device, the at least one moderator input-device being adapted to:

- create data structures defining moderator images that are then included on the moderator work area, and
- to select moderator images that are then simultaneously included on each of the plurality of participant work areas;

wherein the moderator work area comprises a main layer, a moderator layer, a participant layer, and a background layer;

wherein each participant work area comprises:

- a main layer;
- a participant layer;
- a moderator layer common to the moderator work area; and
- a background layer common to the moderator work area;

wherein the moderator input-device is further adapted to select participant layers from any of the participant workstations that are then copied to the moderator's participant layer;

wherein the network can be used in a group mode and a standalone mode;

wherein every user positioned to use a workstation can hear every other user positioned to use any other workstation; and

wherein data structures defining the images are stored in the database.

58. The network of claim 57, wherein images placed on a participant's work area at a participant workstation may be viewed only at that workstation unless an instruction to permit the images to be viewed from another workstation is given at the participant workstation providing the participant's work area.

59. The network of claim 58, wherein the instruction to permit the images to be viewed from another workstation actively causes data structures corresponding to the images to be transmitted to another workstation.

60. The network of claim 57, further comprising collision-correction functionality.

61. The network of claim 60, wherein the collision-correction functionality comprises functionality permitting toggling between a plurality of view modes.

62. The network of claim 61, wherein the plurality of view modes includes at least one member from the set consisting of:

- a) a mode in which the moderator layer is displayed;
- b) a mode in which the background layer is displayed;
- c) a mode in which the participant layer is displayed.

63. The network of claim 60, wherein the collision-correction functionality comprises functionality permitting relocation of images on the participant work area.

64. The network of claim 63, wherein the relocation of images occurs automatically when a collision occurs.

65. The network of claim 57, further comprising collision-avoidance functionality.

66. The network of claim 65, wherein the collision-avoidance functionality comprises an area on the participant layers that does not overlap with either the background layer or the moderator layer.

67. The network of claim 65, wherein the collision-avoidance functionality comprises functionality that permits the participant to place footnote images on the participant work area that provide a link between the footnote images and corresponding images located elsewhere.

68. A network of computers programmed for knowledge transfer in a group setting, the network comprising:

a server comprising a database;

a plurality of participant workstations, each programmed to provide a participant work area and having at least one corresponding participant input-device, each of the participant input-devices being adapted to create data structures defining participant images that are then included on the participant work area;

a moderator workstation, programmed to provide a moderator work area and comprising at least one moderator input-device, the at least one moderator input-device being adapted to:

- create data structures defining moderator images that are then included on the moderator work area, and
- to select moderator images that are then simultaneously included on each of the plurality of participant work areas; and

collision-correction functionality;

wherein the data structures are stored in the database;

wherein the moderator work area comprises a main layer, a moderator layer, a participant layer, and a background layer;

wherein each participant work area comprises:

- a main layer;
- a participant layer;
- a moderator layer common to the moderator work area; and
- a background layer common to the moderator work area;

wherein the moderator input-device is further adapted to select participant layers from any of the plurality of participant work areas that are then copied to the participant layer on the moderator's virtual drawing surface;

wherein a participant layer may only be selected to be copied to the participant layer on the moderator's virtual drawing surface after an instruction has been given at the participant workstation upon which the participant layer resides;

wherein the network can be used in a group mode and a standalone mode;

wherein every user positioned to use a workstation can hear every other user positioned to use any other workstation.

69. The network of claim 68, wherein the collision-correction functionality comprises functionality permitting toggling between a plurality of view modes.

70. The network of claim 69, wherein the plurality of view modes includes at least one member from the set consisting of:

- a) a mode in which the moderator layer is displayed;
- b) a mode in which the background layer is displayed;
- c) a mode in which the participant layer is displayed.

71. The network of claim 68, wherein the collision-correction functionality comprises functionality permitting relocation of images on the participant work area.

72. The network of claim 71, wherein the relocation of images occurs automatically when a collision occurs.

73. The network of claim 68, further comprising collision-avoidance functionality.

74. The network of claim 73, wherein the collision-avoidance functionality comprises a margin in the participant layer that does not overlap with either the moderator layer or the background layer.

75. A system for knowledge transfer in a group setting, the system comprising:
a server comprising a database;
a plurality of participant work stations, each comprising:
at least one participant display device;
at least one input device;
a participant virtual drawing surface, comprising:
a main layer;
a moderator layer;
a participant layer; and
a background layer;

the at least one participant input device being adapted to permit the participant to create data structures defining images that are organized into the participant layer and displayed on the at least one participant display device;

a moderator work station, comprising:

at least one moderator display device;

at least one moderator input-device;

a moderator virtual drawing surface, comprising:

a main layer;

a moderator layer;

a participant layer; and

a background layer;

the at least one moderator input device being adapted to create data structures that are organized into the moderator layer and defining images that are displayed on the at least one moderator display device and on each of the at least one participant display devices;

wherein the data structures are stored in the database.

76. The system of claim 75, wherein the moderator input-device is further adapted to select images on any of the plurality of participant layers that are then copied to the participant layer of moderator virtual drawing surface.

77. The system of claim 76, further comprising at least one member of the set consisting of a video recording device and an audio recording device.

78. The system of claim 76, wherein a session can be replayed on the moderator display device and on each of the at least one participant display devices by adding images corresponding to the data structures to a composite image in the order the data structures were created.

79. The system of claim 78, further comprising at least one member of the set consisting of a video recording device and an audio recording device.

80. The system of claim 79, wherein the images corresponding to the data structures can be added to the composite image one at a time in response to an instruction.

81. The system of claim 79, further comprising:
at least one member of the set consisting of a video playback device and an audio playback device;
wherein a recording can be played back on the member of the set in
synchronization with the data structures, such that the images
corresponding to the data structures are added to the composite image at
points in time corresponding to the points in the recording where the data
structures were created.